

# Anticipating Disaster: Do Our Vendors Meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines?

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## Accessibility LibGuide

- MUSC recently mandated all digital content be accessible and comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0)
- Given this mandate, faculty began to reach out to liaisons to understand which MUSC Libraries-subscribed resources are accessible, thus a LibGuide was born
- Step 1: Research each publisher and resource that MUSC subscribes to and create a spreadsheet with general accessibility statements that link to further information
- Step 2: Obtain Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) or Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) and make available from LibGuide
- Step 3: Continually update LibGuide as needed

## Samples of Publisher VPAT and Accessibility Statements

SpringerNature

Section 1194.22 Web-based internet information and applications

Our target standards are W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 (to level AA). We take accessibility very seriously, and are constantly trying to improve. For instance we've developed Jaxi - a tool that allows automated accessibility testing. We are using this to monitor our accessibility compliance.

<https://github.com/springernature/vpat/blob/master/springerlink.md>

Elsevier  
ScienceDirect

Web accessibility

Enabling people with disabilities to access content quickly and easily

We demonstrate our commitment to web accessibility by enabling access and optimizing the experience for individuals with disabilities and impairments, including auditory, cognitive, physical, speech and visual disabilities. ScienceDirect aspires to meet all guidelines established by the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 and the U.S. Section 508 Standards of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, as well as similar standards enacted by countries around the globe.

<https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/sciencedirect/support/web-accessibility>

Wiley

Wiley is committed to serving the needs of the disabled population and making Wiley Online Library accessible to all users. We continually review accessibility compliance and development practices to strengthen that commitment and ensure that our content is available to the entire research community. Wiley Online Library currently endeavors to conform to level AA of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, and to section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act.

Should you experience any difficulty in accessing Wiley Online Library, please contact us. If you're an institutional administrator who would like a copy of our Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT), please contact your account manager.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/accessibility>

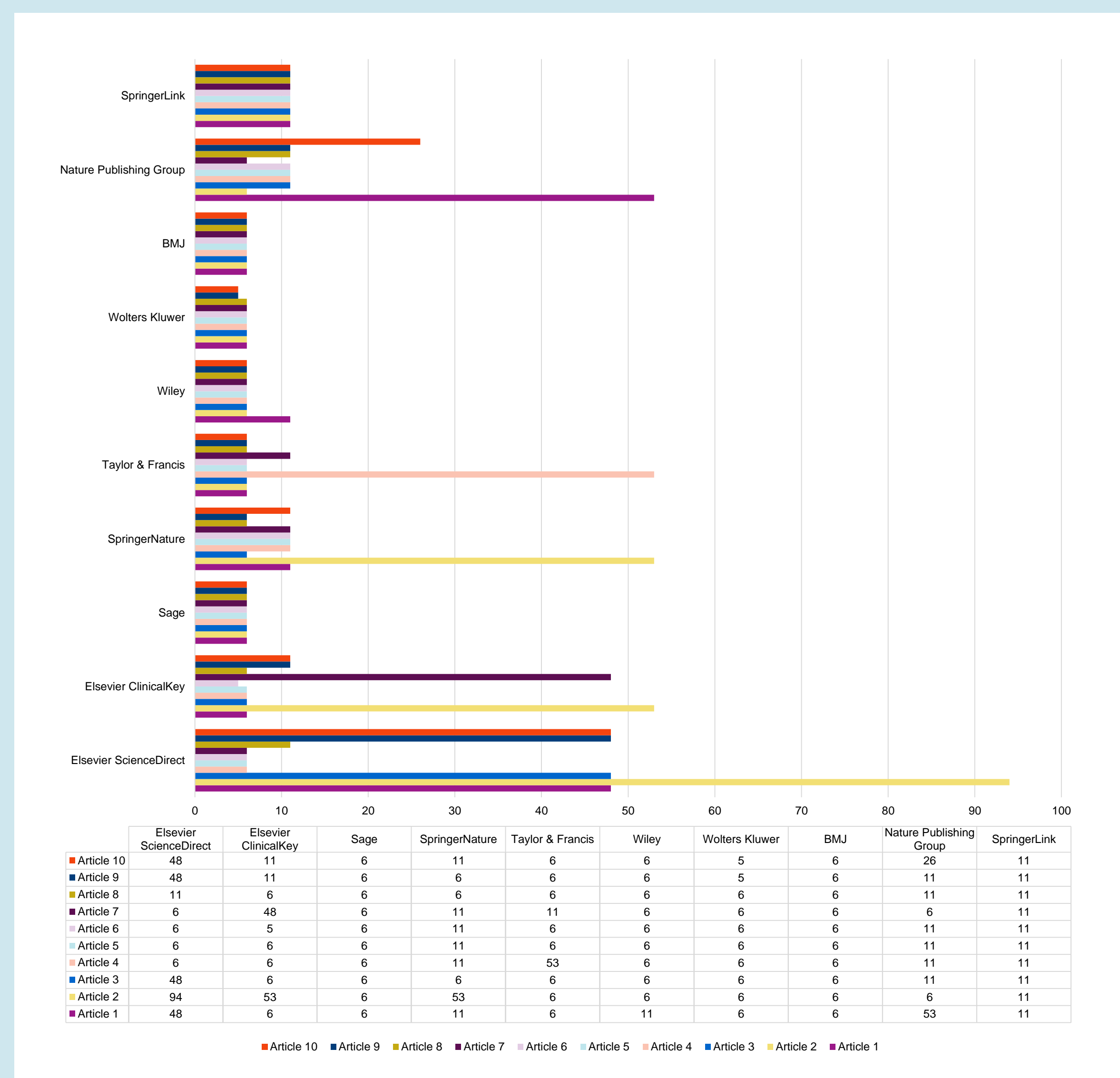
## Initial Observations

- More than 75% of MUSC Libraries-subscribed resources have a VPAT, ACR, or accessibility statement on their website
- Web pages usually conform with level A and AA checkpoints of WCAG 2.0
- Often, legacy pages and searches do not conform**
- Not all publishers list a retroactive timeline
- PDF files are non-conformant
- Some publishers have made an effort to tag and include machine readable text for text-to-speech software
- Other publishers have not specified any attempt to tag or markup PDFs for accessibility
- Multimedia, especially when linked from 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors, will either be supported with exceptions or not supported.

## Wait...what about PDFs?

- It is common knowledge that PDFs are generally preferred for offline reading
- Who is responsible for making PDFs accessible? Just how accessible are PDFs now?
- To evaluate the degree of accessibility of publishers' PDFs, a random sample of MUSC-authored articles were selected that met the following criteria:
  - Articles were published between January - June 2018
  - Publishers were selected that had 10 or more MUSC-authored articles published during the time period
  - Articles were randomly chosen from each publisher; no bias was given to subject, topic, journal impact, author's h-index, etc.
  - Data was gathered from a librarian initiative to develop a manuscript accessibility service for MUSC authors
  - PDFs were assessed using BlackBoard Ally and Adobe Acrobat's Accessibility Checker (AAAC)

## BlackBoard Ally Accessibility Checker – Percent Accessible



## Results

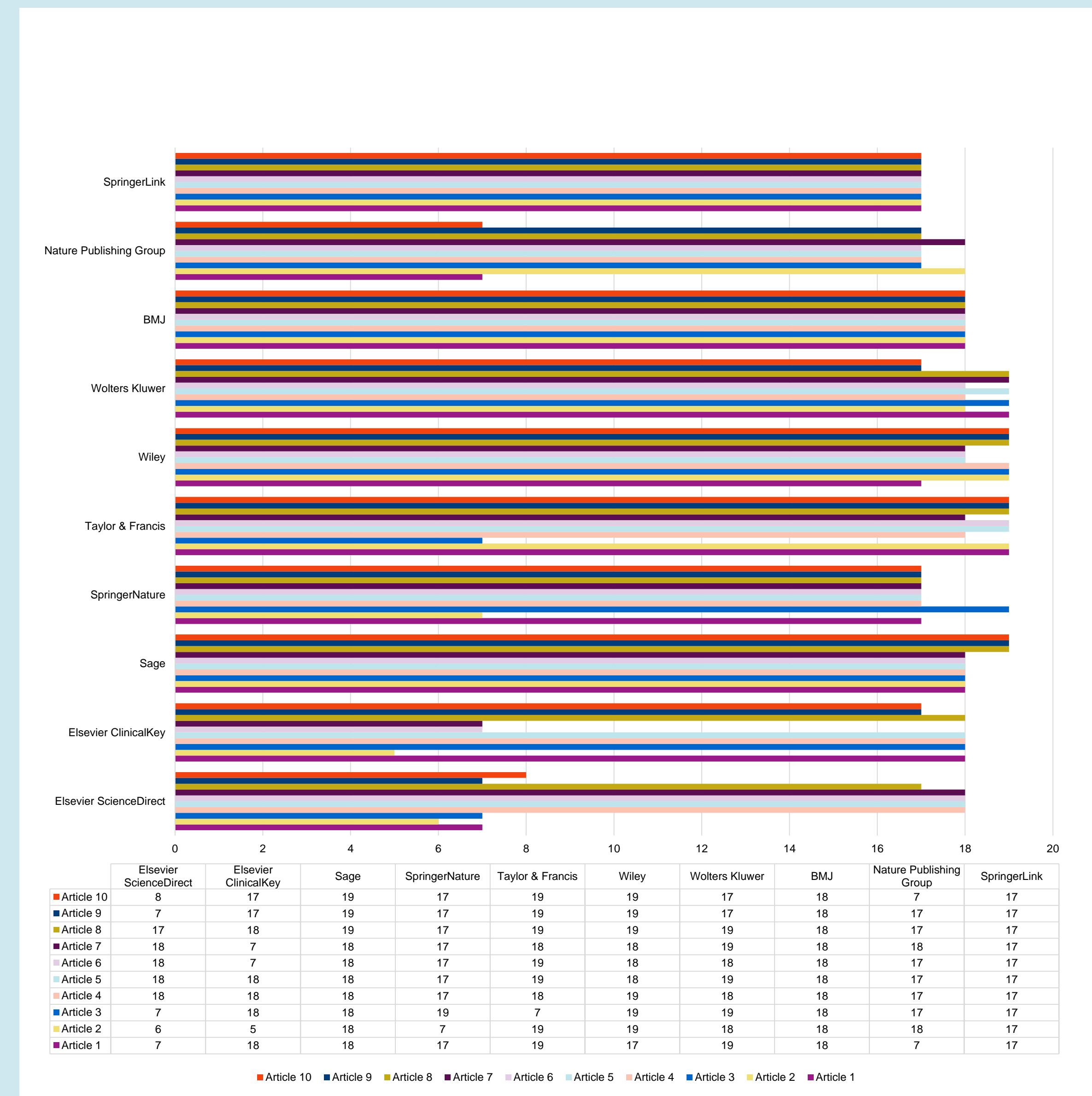
- The articles with the lowest Ally scores generally had the same proportion of failed items with AAAC
  - 5%, 6%, 11% scores in Ally = Failed 17, 18, 19 items in AAAC
- The articles with midrange Ally scores generally had the same proportion of failed items with AAAC
  - 48%, 53% scores in Ally = Failed 7, 5 items in AAAC
- One outlier!
  - Elsevier's Article #2 - 94% Ally score and failed 6 items in AAAC
- Most common failed items in AAAC were within the Alternate Text report

Alternate Text		
Rule Name	Status	Description
Figures alternate text	Failed	Figures require alternate text
Nested alternate text	Failed	Alternate text that will never be read
Associated with content	Failed	Alternate text must be associated with some content
Hides annotation	Failed	Alternate text should not hide annotation
Other elements alternate text	Failed	Other elements that require alternate text

## Conclusions

- The *Accessibility with MUSC Resources* LibGuide makes it easier for users to find publisher-supplied information about MUSC Libraries-subscribed resources in one place
- Testing with publisher PDFs using BlackBoard Ally and Adobe Acrobat Accessibility Checker (AAAC) verified that no PDF was 100% accessible
- A disclaimer was created for faculty to include when linking to PDFs in the learning management system that communicates how MUSC cannot guarantee licensed material is 100% compliant with current WCAG 2.0 standards
  - Can we put the statement in here?**
- Further discussion with publishers is warranted as to how PDFs can be made more accessible

## Adobe Acrobat Accessibility Checker – Items Failed



## Publishers



## Acknowledgements

- I'd like to thank Christine Andresen and Emily Jones for sharing their data with me, especially after we realized how much our projects overlapped
- I'd also like to thank Kelly Burgess for diligently finding the VPAT's and contacting vendors for their accessibility statements